

English 329
Topics in The English Language:
Appalachian Englishes

Contact Information:

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This course directs students to study Appalachian Englishes, including their history, sociolinguistic status, and current variations. For many students, English is the language they have experienced for the majority of their lives, and a legitimate question follows: “Don’t the students already *know* English and Appalachia?” The answer is “yes” . . . and “no”. English speakers from Appalachia know the language, but untrained students are not able to describe the systematic nature of it. Students also know how to pump blood, digest food, and breathe; however, students must learn how to systematically describe the circulatory, digestive, and respiratory systems. In this course, students will learn how English variation in Appalachia works linguistically and socially.

As Jennifer Cramer (University of Kentucky) writes, “The Appalachian Mountains, which range from New York to Mississippi, making up part of the landscape of 13 different states, are known to many Americans as being home to a unique cultural and linguistic experience.” In this course, we explore how unique or unitary this region’s language variation is. We hold up the many myths and stereotypes about this region to scholarly scrutiny as we work through its linguistic qualities. We will compare the dialect areas of Appalachia with other regions, noting similarities and differences. We will also examine the history, origins, and development of English in Appalachia and address issues of identity, education, and standardness.

Course Objectives:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the linguistic and social constraints on Appalachian Englishes.
 2. Demonstrate respect for human language, including vernacular variation.
 3. Deploy spoken and written skills to explain Appalachian dialects to a public audience.
 4. Expound a knowledge of the diachronic and synchronic language variation that pertains to Appalachian Englishes.
 5. Confront the assumptions of traditional prescriptivism.
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Learning Outcomes: Through spoken presentations and in written papers,

1. Students will be able to explain the language patterns of modern Appalachian Englishes.
 2. Students will be able to analyze natural language, predominantly Appalachian Englishes.
 3. Students will be able to make this analysis according to modern sociolinguistic methods.
 4. Students will be able to explain the social pressures associated with standard and vernacular varieties.
 5. Students will be able to explain the diachronic variation that resulted in Appalachian Englishes.
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Texts:

- Elizabeth Catte, 2018, *What you are getting wrong about Appalachia*. Belt Publishing.

Some of the eCampus readings:

- Kirk Hazen, editor. 2020. *Appalachian Englishes: The Life of Language in Appalachia*. Morgantown, WV: WVU Press.
 - Amy Clark and Nancy Hayward (eds). *Talking Appalachia*. University of Kentucky Press.
 - Montgomery, Michael. "The historical background and nature of the Englishes of Appalachia";
 - Wolfram, Walt. "African American Speech in Southern Appalachia";
 - Reaser, Jeff, "Dialect and Education in Appalachia";
 - Sohn, Katherine, "Silence, Voice, and Identity among Appalachian College Women";
 - Ellis, Michael, "The treatment of dialect in Appalachian literature".
 - Terman, Anna Rachel. "Intersections of Appalachian Identity". *Appalachia Revisited*: 73-91.
 - Hazen, Kirk. A Historical Assessment of Research Questions in Sociolinguistics. *Research Methods in Sociolinguistics*.
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Attendance:

Because this course depends on your active preparation for every class and your active involvement during every class period, regular (and on time) attendance and participation are critical to your success in this class. The following paragraphs outline course policies and expectations.

Absences: Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student. Personal situations and required university events may arise that, on a rare occasion, make it impossible for you to be in class. Remember, however, that is why a few absences are allowed; please reserve absences for such events.

- Each student is allowed up to three (3) absences from this Tuesday/Thursday class.
- Each additional absence will lower your final grade by an additional letter grade. Thus, five or more absences necessarily results in a failing grade.

In addition, two other situations will count towards your absence total. If you are late to class, it will count as half an absence. Both of these situations are matters of respect for your peers and the instructor.

If you must miss class, *you* are responsible for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me in advance if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class. Please note: If you know you must miss more than three classes during the semester, I strongly advise you to take the class during another term since multiple absences will necessarily limit your academic success in this class.

Absences and quizzes: Absences complicate the testing situations in this class. Please attend for every quiz.

Advice:

If you feel lost or even the slightest bit confused, contact me. This is not a class you want to get behind in. Email or come by during office hours. If you cannot make office hours, we can set up a time to talk. The quicker you get your questions

straightened out, the better off you will be. Even if it is simply to let me know that I should slow down or give more examples in class, please let me know.

You have a wonderful resource for improving your scholarly writing with the Writing Studio:
<https://speakwrite.wvu.edu/students>. Please use it.

Grades:

Task	Due Date	% of Final Grade
Discussions, HWs, Quizzes	Throughout the semester	40%
Transcript	Feb 21	10%
Feature compilation paper	March 23	15%
Presentation & handout	April 28	10%
Final paper	May 7	25%

Unless otherwise approved by me, assignments are due to me by email attachment by 11:59 PM on the date indicated above. Please label your file with your last name and the assignment name: e.g. Hazen_Transcript. No paper assignments will be accepted. You may want to CC yourself on the email to be sure that it was properly sent. We will arrange for the interview turn-in separately.

Each assignment will have its own assignment sheet, detailing specific requirements. For the transcript, the feature compilation, the presentation handout, and the final paper, there will be a draft due in advance of the final due date for each assignment. I will provide feedback on those drafts and expect you to improve your work from those comments.

For the homework assignments, as a class we will work through them after their completion, and I will provide feedback to the class as a whole to note strengths to maintain and trouble spots to avoid as you continue to improve your abilities to explain and apply key course concepts. For the more involved assignments, we will spend some class time working through challenges students face before they are due also. Knowledge is cumulative. Understanding your strengths and challenges on early work will help you do better as you continue to articulate what you know. You are also welcome to meet during office hours or by appointment for additional feedback.

Late assignments will be penalized by deducting 10 percentage points from the assignment's grade (e.g. If you earn an 85%, but it was late, you get a 75% for that assignment). All assignments must be turned in to pass the course.

SpeakWrite:

English 329 has been designated as a SpeakWrite course by the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences. This class is committed to helping you communicate your knowledge effectively as you keep four key components in mind: purpose, audience, conventions, and trouble spots (or PACT for short). You can find resources at [SpeakWrite.wvu.edu](https://speakwrite.wvu.edu)

Inclusivity Statement:

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

Academic Integrity:

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Class	Week	Day	Date	Topic	Reading
1	1	Tuesday	Jan 14	Introduction to ling and socioling	
2	1	Thursday	Jan 16	Appalachia, an introduction	Catte Intro Christian foreword
3	2	Tuesday	Jan 21	WVRHC (meet there)	RMiS Ch 1
4	2	Thursday	Jan 23	Where and what is Appalachia?	Hasty Ch 1 Catte Part 1
5	3	Tuesday	Jan 28	Where and what is Appalachia?	Montgomery "Background"
6	3	Thursday	Jan 30	Sounds of Appalachia	Reed Ch 2
7	4	Tuesday	Feb 4	Sounds of Appalachia	
8	4	Thursday	Feb 6	Sounds of Appalachia	
9	5	Tuesday	Feb 11	Syntax and Morphology of Appalachia	Hazen Ch 3
10	5	Thursday	Feb 13	Syntax and Morphology of Appalachia	
11	6	Tuesday	Feb 18	Syntax and Morphology of Appalachia	
12	6	Thursday	Feb 20	Interlude: Appalachian scholarship	Lewis & Billings
13	7	Tuesday	Feb 25	Discourse in Appalachia	Burkette Ch 4
14	7	Thursday	Feb 27	Identity	Cramer Ch 5 Terman "Intersections"
15	8	Tuesday	March 3	Positioning in Appalachia	Catte Part II
16	8	Thursday	March 5	Language and gender	M&I Ch 6
17	9	Tuesday	March 10	Variation by ethnicity in Appalachia	Childs Ch 7; Wolfram AA Speech
18	9	Thursday	March 12	Variation by ethnicity in Appalachia	
	10	Week	March 16-20	Spring Break	
19	11	Tuesday	March 24	Land, justice, people	Catte Part III

20	11	Thursday	March 26	Folklore and language	Lovejoy Ch 8
21	12	Tuesday	March 31	Folklore and language	
22	12	Thursday	April 2	Literature and language	Ellis, "Lit"
23	13	Tuesday	April 7	Literature and language	Shepherd & Hazen Ch 9
24	13	Thursday	April 9	Literature and language	
25	14	Tuesday	April 14	Education and language	Sohn "Silence"
26	14	Thursday	April 16	Education and language	Reaser "Dialects and Ed"
27	15	Tuesday	April 21	Education and language	Dunstan & Jaeger Ch 11
28	15	Thursday	April 23	Education and language	Slocum Ch 10
29	16	Tuesday	April 28	Project Presentations	
30	16	Thursday	April 30	Project Presentations: ESA	
31		Thursday	May 7	Final project due, 11:59 PM	